

Abstract

The topic of the present thesis is “The Experience of Holocaust: The Fate and Works of Jean Améry and Primo Levi”. Both authors experienced imprisonment in concentration camps due to their Jewish origin, and this fact is reflected in their works. The thesis aims to follow the parallels in the lives and works of both the authors.

Jean Améry and Primo Levi came from nonpracticing Jewish families. This determined their own attitude towards Jewishness. Both of them joined the resistance during World War Two and were consequently sent to the concentration camp in Auschwitz. Apart from Auschwitz, Jean Améry was transported to two other camps. When WWII finished, they began to reflect their experience in their works. Jean Améry, as well as Primo Levi committed suicide many years after the war.

In comparison with other authors writing about the Holocaust (Theodor W. Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Bruno Bettelheim, Viktor Frankl or Raul Hilberg), Jean Améry and Primo Levi addressed more specific, and to a certain point similar problems.

For Jean Améry, the essential topic is the status of an intellectual in Auschwitz, but Primo Levi reflects upon this too. Other themes recurrent in the work of both authors include: existence or non-existence of God, the question of collective guilt of the German nation or the hierarchy of camp prisoners.

The thesis thus deals not only with the similarities in the lives of the authors, but focuses especially on similar topics they address and whether they agree or not.